

## Taking Minutes

Minutes are a synopsis of what went on at a meeting. Without good meeting minutes, we may not remember or recognize:

- What we decided in the meeting
- What we accomplished in the meeting
- What we agreed to in terms of next steps (action items)

Don't try to record notes verbatim. Minutes are meant to give an outline of what happened in the meeting, not a record of who said what.

### 10 Questions that should be answered in minutes -

- When was the meeting? Date and time
- Who attended? Or an accounting of the number of members attending
- What topics were discussed
- What was decided?
- What actions were agreed upon?
  - Motions made (include name of person) and that they were seconded – not necessary to include person's name who seconds.
- Who is to complete the actions, and by when?
- Is there anything special the reader of the minutes should know or do?
- Is a follow-up meeting scheduled? If so, where? Where? Why?

In order to find information and to allow readers to skim for information, I would use headings/bullets.

### Do's and Don'ts

- Do create a template for recording the minutes or use the agenda from the meeting
- Do write minutes soon after the meeting – within a day or so
- Don't skip writing minutes just because everyone attended the meeting and knows what happened. Meeting minutes serve as a record of the meeting.
- Don't describe all the "he said, she said" details. Record topics discussed, decisions made and action items
- Don't include any information that will embarrass anyone
- Do use positive language – rather than describing the discussion as heated or angry, use passionate, lively or energetic.
- Do be objective. Write in the same tense throughout and avoid using people's names except for motions of seconds.
- Do avoid inflammatory or personal observations. **Dull writing is the key to appropriate minutes.**
- If you need to refer to other documents, attach them to the final minutes. Don't rewrite or summarize them.